

March 4, 2003

David Martinez
TWCC Medical Dispute Resolution
4000 IH 35 South, MS 48
Austin, TX 78704

MDR Tracking #: M2-03-0626-01
IRO #: 5251

___ has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance as an Independent Review Organization. The Texas Worker's Compensation Commission has assigned this case to ___ for independent review in accordance with TWCC Rule 133.308 which allows for medical dispute resolution by an IRO.

___ has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. In performing this review, all relevant medical records and documentation utilized to make the adverse determination, along with any documentation and written information submitted, was reviewed.

The independent review was performed by a matched peer with the treating doctor. This case was reviewed by a licensed Medical Doctor with a specialty and board certification in Neurological Surgery. The ___ health care professional has signed a certification statement stating that no known conflicts of interest exist between the reviewer and any of the treating doctors or providers or any of the doctors or providers who reviewed the case for a determination prior to the referral to ___ for independent review. In addition, the reviewer has certified that the review was performed without bias for or against any party to the dispute.

CLINICAL HISTORY

___ is a 40-year-old woman injured on ___ when bending over at work to pick up something. She felt a pop in her lower back. She has experienced pain with radiation down the right lower extremity and a positive straight leg raising sign in the right lower extremity. The patient also has an MRI which is interpreted as consistent with L4/5 and L5/S1 annular bulges. She is utilizing significant narcotic analgesia without complete relief of her lumbar-sacral radiating pain syndrome.

REQUESTED SERVICE

Epidural steroid injections are requested for ___.

DECISION

The reviewer disagrees with the prior adverse determination.

BASIS FOR THE DECISION

The reviewer finds that the patient suffers a posttraumatic lumbar-sacral radiculopathy/radiculitis, and that the proposed epidural steroid injections are warranted in this situation, based on current treatment guidelines and care standards. It is appropriate even in the face of relatively mild anatomic alterations of the lumbar-sacral discs to treat an inflamed lumbar-sacral nerve root with epidural steroid injections in an attempt to alleviate the clinical syndrome of lumbar-sacral radiculopathy and break the cycle of inflammation which is frequently solely responsible for the posttraumatic lumbar-sacral radiculopathy that the reviewer sees in this case.

____ has performed an independent review solely to determine the medical necessity of the health services that are the subject of the review. ____ has made no determinations regarding benefits available under the injured employee's policy.

As an officer of ____, I certify that there is no known conflict between the reviewer, ____ and/or any officer/employee of the IRO with any person or entity that is a party to the dispute.

____ is forwarding by mail and, in the case of time sensitive matters by facsimile, a copy of this finding to the treating doctor, payor and/or URA, patient and the TWCC.

Sincerely,

YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST A HEARING

Either party to this medical dispute may disagree with all or part of the decision and has a right to request a hearing.

In the case of prospective ***spinal surgery*** decision, a request for a hearing must be made in writing and it must be received by the TWCC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within 10 days of your receipt of this decision. (20 Tex. Admin. Code 142.5(c)).

In the case of other ***prospective (preauthorization) medical necessity*** disputes a request for a hearing must be in writing, and it must be received by the TWCC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within **20** (twenty) days of your receipt of this decision (28 Tex. Admin. Code 148.3).

This decision is deemed received by you 5 (five) days after it was mailed (28 Tex. Admin. Code 102.4(h) or 102.5(d)). A request for a hearing should be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings, Texas Worker's Compensation Commission, P.O. Box 40669, Austin, TX 78704-0012. A copy of this decision should be attached to the request.

The party appealing this decision shall deliver a copy of its written request for a hearing to all other parties involved in the dispute, per TWCC rule 133.308(t)(2).

I hereby certify, in accordance with TWCC Rule 102.4 (h), that a copy of this Independent Review Organization decision was sent to the carrier, requestor, claimant (and/or the claimant's representative) and the TWCC via facsimile, U.S. Postal Service or both on this 4th day of March 2003.